

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WSHDC IMMEDIATE 1403

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 9036

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AID GR US

SUBJ: ASSISTANCE TO GREECE: COMMENTS BY BITSIOS

REF A. STATE 273762 B. ATHENS 9022

1. DURING THE COURSE OF MY MEETING LAST NIGHT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS HE TOOK OUT A SET OF REPORTING TELEGRAMS FROM THE GREEK EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON AND SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN VERY DISAPPOINTED THAT THE PROPOSED ASSISTANCE TO GREECE SEEMED TO BE ENCOUNTERING SOME DIFFICULTIES IN THE CONGRESS. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE PROPOSED GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE WAS DROPPED FROM THE PACKAGE AND ASKED ME FOR MY ASSESSMENT OF THE PROSPECTS FOR THE OVERALL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ORIGINALLY PROPOSED BY THE PRESIDENT.

2. I TOLD BITSIOS THAT I WAS NOT FULLY UP-TO-DATE ON DEVELOPMENTS OF THE LAST 24 TO 48 HOURS IN WASHINGTON ON THIS SUBJECT (I HAD NOT YET SEEN REF A) BUT THAT I WANTED TO REGISTER SEVERAL POINTS WITH HIM. FIRST, HE AND THE GOG SHOULD HAVE NO DOUBT ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE THE ADMINISTRATION ATTACHED TO THE ASSISTANCE PROPOSED FOR GREECE AND THAT I WAS ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT STRONG
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EFFORTS HAD BEEN, WERE BEING, AND WOULD CONTINUE TO

BE MADE BY MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH TO JUSTIFY AND SUPPORT THIS ASSISTANCE IN MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS. SECOND, AS I HAD INDICATED ON REPEATED OCCASIONS TO HIM AND MINISTERS PAPALIGOURAS AND AVEROFF, THEY SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE STRENGTH OF OPPOSITION IN THE CONGRESS -- AND IN THE UNITED STATES AS A WHOLE -- TO SOME ASPECTS OF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, PARTICULARLY GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE. THIRD, THE CONGRESSIONAL LEGISLATIVE PROCESS WAS OFTEN LONG AND COMPLEX AND ONE SHOULD NOT DRAW EXCESSIVE OR PREMATURE CONCLUSIONS FROM ANY ONE STAGE OR DEVELOPMENT IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS. I TOLD HIM THAT I WAS SURE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS WOULD BE PREPARED TO REMAIN IN THE CLOSEST TOUCH WITH THE GREEK EMBASSY AND THAT I AND OUR EMBASSY HERE IN ATHENS WOULD ALSO BE PREPARED TO CONSULT AND ASSIST IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE.

3. BITSIOS ASKED ME TO CONVEY TO WASHINGTON HIS DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE APPARENT FAILURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE TO INCLUDE GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE FOR GREECE IN THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION IT WOULD BE RECOMMENDING TO THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE. HE SAID HE HAD ALSO RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT THE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO TURKEY AND GREECE WERE APPARENTLY BEING BRACKETED AND CONSIDERED TOGETHER AND HE HOPED THE USG WOULD NOT FAIL TO CONSIDER ASSISTANCE TO EACH COUNTRY SEPARATELY AND ON ITS OWN MERITS. I TOLD BITSIOS THAT I WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY FINAL DECISION OR VOTE BY THE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO ELIMINATE GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO GREECE BUT THAT I WOULD CONVEY HIS VIEWS TO WASHINGTON AND CONTINUE TO REMAIN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH HIM ON THIS SUBJECT. KUBISCH

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